

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 HEW-08 AID-20 NSF-04 SPM-01 L-03

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R 180640Z APR 74

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 934

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 5162

DEPT PASS TO DHEW/PHS, NIH, FDA, SRS, NSF, SMI, DNR

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TAGS: TPHY OSCI IN

SUBJECT: VISIT OF DHEW HEALTH TEAM TO INDIA

BEGIN SUMMARY: IT APPEARS THAT DURING THE NEXT SIX MONTHS THE INDIAN COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH (ICMR) WILL TRANSMIT A NUMBER OF BROAD, MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PROPOSALS TO THE DHEW FOR REVIEW. FOLLOWING THIS REVIEW, JOINT INDO-US EXPERT WORKING GROUPS IN THE SPECIFIED FIELDS OF INTEREST WOULD MEET IN INDIA TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS.

PRACTICAL SCIENTIST-TO-SCIENTIST AND MANAGER-TO-MANAGER INTERACTION WILL CONTINUE AND INCREASE DURING THE ENSUING MONTHS REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIFIC FORMAL MECHANISM CHOSEN. END SUMMARY.

1. DR. S. PAUL EHRLICH, ACTING US SURGEON GENERAL AND DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, ACCOMPANIED BY FOUR ASSOCIATES REPRESENTING HEALTH AGENCIES OF THE DEPARTMENT, VISITED DELHI APRIL 2-6. NAMES AND ORGANIZATIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

MRS. LINDA A. VOGEL
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THE TEAM, SCIATT, AND THE DY. SCIATT MET WITH MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING, DR. KARAN SINGH; DY. MINISTER FOR FAMILY PLANNING, MR. BASAPPA; MR. C S RAMACHANDRAN, SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH; DR. J.B. SHRIVASTAV, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES; DR. C. GOPALAN, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, INDIAN COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH AND OTHER MOH OFFICIALS. MEETINGS WERE ALSO HELD WITH DR. A. RAMACHANDRAN, SECRETAR MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; DR. NAYUDAMMA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR); DR. SHANKAR NARAYAN, ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION (UGC); AND DR. V T H GUNARATNE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR WHO AND SELECTED STAFF.

2. DURING THESE MEETINGS DR. EHRLICH REVIEWED THE PROGRESS OF RESEARCH COLLABORATION OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS AND THE TANGIBLE BENEFITS DRRIVED FROM THIS COOPER- ACTION. HE POINTED OUT SOME OF THE DISPARITIES OF EMPHASES WHICH HAD CAUSED SOME PROBLEMS IN THE SFC RESEARCH FUNDED
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PROGRAM (SO-CALLED PL-480) APPARENT TO BOTH SIDES, AND STATED THAT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM THESE PAST SHORTCOMINGS. NOW IS AN OPPORTUNE TIME TO MAKE SURE OUR JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED CONSIDERING THE PRIORITIES OF BOTH COUNTRIES. THIS IS NOT AND NEVER WAS AN AID PRO-GRAM BUT IN MANY CASES IT HAD BEEN LOOKED UPON AS A GIVER-RECEIVER RELATIONSHIP. THIS IS ENDED. WE WILL WORK ONLY IN AREAS OF HIGH VALUE TO BOTH SIDES. THE FUNDING OF AGREED

UPON PROGRAMS, WHETHER IN US OWNED RUPEES, DOLLARS, OR INDIAN OWNED RUPEES SHOULD BE REGARDED ONLY AS A MECHANISM TO FACILITATE THE COOPERATION AND NOT THE PROGRAM ITSELF.

3. EHRLICH SUGGESTED THAT TO BUILD A PROGRAM OF LASTING VALUE ON A SOUND SCIENTIFIC BASE, EACH COOPERATIVE PROJECT SHOULD BE JOINTLY REVIEWED PERIODICALLY. DECISION THEN WOULD BE MADE ON CONTENT AND ANY NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS.

4. THE REACTION TO THE HEALTH TEAM'S VISIT IN THE MOH WAS VERY ENTHUSIASTIC. THIS WARM RECEPTION MUST BE TAKEN IN THE CONTEXT OF A GRIM ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. OF COURSE, SUBSTANTIVE TECHNICAL CONTACTS HAVE REMAINED VERY GOOD IN HEALTH, AS WELL AS THE OTHER SCIENCES.

5. STRIKING EVIDENCE OF THE HIGH MOH INTEREST WAS THE FACT THAT EHRLICH'S VISIT TOOK PLACE DURING THE LAST CRITICAL WEEK OF THE THREE-MONTH OLD DOCTORS' STRIKE AND THE BEGINNING OF THE MOHFP MEETINGS OF ALL INDIAN STATES' HEALTH OFFICIALS LAUNCHING THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN HEALTH PROGRAMS WHICH BEGAN APRIL 1.

6. HEALTH MINISTER KARAN SINGH, ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT INDO-US COOPERATION, STATED OUR COLLABORATION IN MEDICAL RESEARCH, HEALTH DELIVERY, NUTRITION, AND FAMILY PLANNING MUST BE ASSOCIATED LOSELY WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS LAID DOWN IN THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN. THE PLAN SHOULD BE STUDIED IN MEETINGS WITH ICMR AND DGHS AND AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST CHOSEN.

7. KARAN SINGH ASKED UNDER WHAT FRAMEWORK EXPANDED COOPERATION COULD TAKE PLACE. WOULD THERE BE A BILATERAL AGREEMENT OF SOME SORT? EHRLICH SUGGESTED STARTING WITH A

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JOINT PRESS STATEMENT. KARAN SINGH SAID BECAUSE OF THE BUSY WEEK AND THE CLEARANCES THAT A JOINT PRESS STATEMENT WOULD HAVE TO RECEIVE FROM MEA, ETC., HE DID NOT SEE HOW THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED DURING DR. EHRLICH'S STAY IN DELHI. HE SUGGESTED WAITING FOR A FEW WEEKS WHEN IT COULD BE DECIDED WHETHER A JOINT STATEMENT OR AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN MOHFP AND DHEW WOULD BE THE MOST APPROPRIATE APPROACH DELINEATING SUBSTANTIVE AREAS OF COOPERATION AND PROGRAM MECHANISMS.

8. THE MEETINGS WITH THE SECRETARY, MOHFP, AND DIRECTOR GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES AND THEIR STAFFS, COVERED IN DETAIL, THE VARIOUS HEALTH SCIENCE FIELDS THAT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO INDIA. AGAIN THE BROAD NATIONAL GOALS OF THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN; HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING AND NUTRITION WERE

POINTED OUT AS PARAMOUNT FOR COOPERATION WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. THE IDEA IS TO IDENTIFY WHERE BIOMEDICAL AND HEALTH RESEARCH COLLABORATION CAN BEST BE PUT TO USE IN SOLVING THESE HEALTH PROBLEMS. CRITICAL AREAS MENTIONED WERE HEALTH DELIVERY TO RURAL AREAS, NUTRITION AND MALNUTRITION, FAMILY PLANNING--PRIMARILY REPRODUCTION BIOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY, FOOD ADULTERATION AND MYCOTOXINS, DRUG RESEARCH, DRUG ABUSE, RESEARCH ON COMMUNICABLE DISEASE, (LEPROSY, TB, MALARIA, ETC.), ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, INCLUDING WATER QUALITY, VIRAL BONE DISEASES, CANCER AND HEART DISEASE. SUCH AREAS AS GEOGRAPHIC PATHOLOGY OF CANCER, EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND THE STUDY OF UNIQUE TYPES OF CANCER AND POPULATIONS WERE MENTIONED. RESEARCH ON MEDICINAL PLANTS AND HERBS FOR THEIR POSSIBLE BIOCHEMICAL REACTION IN CERTAIN DISEASES IS OF HIGH INTEREST. MOYNIHAN

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 HEW-08 AID-20 NSF-04 SPM-01 L-03

SMI-01 H-03 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01

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9. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT ON A NEW ERA OF EXPANDED COOPERATION AND ON THESE FIELDS OF RESEARCH. THERE ARE AMPLE AREAS VALUABLE TO DHEW DOMESTIC PROGRAMS.

10. THE MEETING WITH DR. C. GOPALAN AND HIS STAFF OF THE INDIAN COUNCIL FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH (ICMR) WAS PERHAPS THE MOST CRITICAL FROM THE STANDPOINT OF DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY SCIENCE OFFICE AND DHEW SCIENTISTS. THE ICMR WILL BE THE FOCAL POINT FOR COOPERATION WITH DHEW.

IT WAS DECIDED THAT RESEARCH SUBJECTS IN THE PRIORITY FIELDS WOULD BE IDENTIFIED AND DEVELOPED. THEY WOULD FIRST BE DISCUSSED WITH EMBASSY SCIENCE OFFICERS FOR OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE TO HEW PROGRAMS. THE ICMR WOULD SUGGEST THE INDIAN INSTITUTION AND INVESTIGATORS THAT COULD CONDUCT THESE PROGRAMS. THE PROPOSALS WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO HEW BY THE EMBASSY FOR REVIEW. THE NEXT STEP WOULD BE MEETINGS OF US AND INDIAN EXPERTS IN THESE FIELDS UNDER ICMR AUSPICES. PROJECTS DECIDED UPON WOULD THEN BE SUBMITTED TO THE USA AND THE GOI FOR FINAL CLEARANCE.

11. DR. GOPALAN ADVISED DR. EHRLICH THAT THE ICMR FIRST PROPOSALS BE REACHING THE EMBASSY IN A FEW WEEKS.

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12. WHEN QUESTIONED, GOPALAN REMARKED THAT ICMR HAD COMPLETED ITS REVIEW OF THE 17 PENDING SFC HEALTH PROJECTS THAT HAD RECEIVED GOI APPROVAL PRIOR TO JULY 1972. MANY OF THESE WERE CONSIDERED STILL RELEVANT AND RECOMMENDED TO THE MOH FOR FUNDING. (WE HAVE SINCE BEEN INFORMED BY AN OFFICIAL OF THE MOHFP THAT ALL OF THE PROJECTS WILL BE RECOMMENDED TO THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE FOR PAYMENT.) IT WAS AGREED THAT THE FIRST STEP IS TO WIND UP THE PENDING PROJECTS ONE WAY OR THE OTHER TO DETERMINE HOW THEY WOULD FIT INTO INDIAN FIFTH PLAN PRIORITIES AND CURRENT HEW INTERESTS AND TO ESTIMATE THE LEVEL OF FUNDING OF THE CURRENT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM.

13. IN THE MEETINGS WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, COUNCIL FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH, DR. Y. NAYUDAMMA AND SECRETARY MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, DR. A. RAMACHANDRAN, DR. EHRLICH REVIEWED THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT AND HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING OFFICIALS. HE EXPLAINED THAT DHEW INTERESTS WERE SOMEWHAT BROADER THAN THOSE OF THE MOH, PARTICULARLY IN FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH. COOPERATION BETWEEN US RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS WITH SELECTED CSIR LABORATORIES IN AREAS OF JOINT INTEREST WOULD BE OF SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT TO BOTH SIDES. DR. NAYUDAMMA POINTED OUT THAT INSTITUTE-TO-INSTITUTE COOPERATION MIGHT BE ARRANGED WITH SUCH LABS AS THE CENTRAL ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE, KANPUR, THE DRUG RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND NATIONAL TOXICOLOGY INSTITUTE IN LUCKNOW, AND THE FOOD TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE AT MYSORE. THERE HAD BEEN A HISTORY OF US-SPONSORED RESEARCH IN THOSE LABS.

14. DR. RAMACHANDRAN, AS SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HAS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COORDINATION

OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS AS WELL AS OFFICIAL CONTACTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION. HE FELT THE FIRST CONCERN OF EXPANDED COOPERATION WOULD BE TO IDENTIFY PROBLEMS, AND THE INSTITUTIONS AND RESOURCES IN INDIA THAT COULD TAKE ON THESE PROBLEMS ON A COLLABORATIVE BASIS. THIS SHOULD BE DONE ON A BROAD COORDINATED AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCALE CONSIDERING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH FIVE UNCLASSIFIED

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YEAR PLAN. A JOINT PROGRAM REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED ON A CONTINUING BASIS.
COMMENTS: AFTER THIS VERY SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF DR. EHRLICH AND HIS ASSOCIATES, THE NEXT STEP IN THE SCENARIO SEEMS CLEARLY TO BE AN INDIAN INITIATIVE.

THE ICMR HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR HEALTH RESEARCH COOPERATION BETWEEN US AGENCIES AND THE GOI, AND IS DEVELOPING MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECTS FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED THROUGH THE EMBASSY TO DHEW FOR INITIAL REVIEW. AFTER THIS REVIEW, DHEW EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS IN THE SELECTED FIELDS CAN MEET IN DELHI WITH ICMR STAFF TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSALS AND DECIDE ON PROJECTS OF MUTUAL INTEREST; PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS AND INSTITUTIONS.

IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHERE AND WITH WHOM DHEW AND OTHER US AGENCIES WILL RELATE ON COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSALS OUTSIDE OF THE PURVIEW OF THE ICMR AND MOHFP.

IN THE PAST, THESE WERE PRIMARILY HANDLED BY THE NATIONAL SCREENING COMMITTEE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION. A NEW NATIONAL SCREENING COMMITTEE MAY BE RECONSTITUTED UNDER THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

THE PROSPECT OF A JOINT COMMISSION, INCLUDING A SUBCOMMISSION ON S AND T ACT AS AN OVERALL REVIEW AND PLANNING BODY, WE FEEL, WOULD STRENGTHEN THE INDIAN SCIENCE LEADERS' ROLE AND GIVE THEM A LEGITIMIZING UMBRELLA TO INTERACT WITH US COUNTERPARTS. THE MAJOR CONCERN WOULD BE TO ALLOW AND PROMOTE THE GREATEST DEGREE OF FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE. END COMMENTS.MOYNIHAN

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